

CUPE K-12

It's crucial that all CUPE locals have their site Health and Safety committees and representatives functional in all work locations. This is how we will ensure that we know what's happening and are able to address problems.

As we return to classrooms, we must ensure that the workplace is a safe place for students and staff.

This bulletin provides info on how to work with different chemicals being used in B.C. schools.

The focus during this crisis has been frequent hand washing, avoiding touching your face, coughing and sneezing into your elbow, and staying home if not well. All of these personal responsibilities continue to be in effect.

As we return to work, please remember to contact your site Health and Safety Committee with any safety concerns.

Let's be vigilant and strong to ensure the safety of all members and students in our schools.

In solidarity and safety,



Warren Williams
K-12 Presidents Council President

Health and safety resources for disinfecting

Virox Multi-purpose acid cleaner: routes of exposure, eye contact, skin contact, inhalation.

Suitable protective clothing and footwear is required. Chemical resistant gloves, chemical splash goggles and appropriate respiratory protection.

Sodium Hypochlorite (5.25%) 1:100 (500 ppm solution) Toxic and corrosive compound. Reacts with several acids including ammonia to produce a toxic gas such as chlorine, which will cause eye irritation and respiratory problems.

When mixing the product proper ventilation is required and appropriate respiratory protection. Proper gloves (i.e. for strong chlorine solution) should be used.

Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (0.5%) This creates irritation of lungs, repeated exposure may cause bronchitis to develop with coughing, phlegm and /or shortness of breath. Prolonged exposure can cause whitening of skin, skin rashes, redness and blisters.

Make sure it is the commercial solution that is being used. **According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 3% of the commercial Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide is considered a stable and effective disinfectant.**

Quaternary Ammonium Compounds This causes coughing, choking, shortness of breath, irritation to the mucous membrane, mouth, nose, and respiratory tract: sore throat, possible chest pains, dizziness.

These chemicals are called 'Quat Cleaners.' They are similar to 'bleach cleaners' so proper PPE's would be required. That would be cleaning gloves and if you have a respiratory issue you should be wearing respiratory protection.

Cyndet Liquid Germicidal Detergent This detergent can cause severe irritation to the eyes if splashed and can cause temporary or permanent damage if not treated properly. Can cause skin irritation, irritation to the respiratory tract and digestive tract.

This detergent requires rubber gloves and safety glasses. Respiratory protection is only required if there is not adequate ventilation. Repeated and prolonged exposure may cause drying of the skin and dermatitis if the worker does not use proper PPE.

Benefect Disinfectant This product is completely biodegradable and has no known health effects as long as it is used in a well-ventilated room.

Every Disinfectant / Cleaner or Wipe can be brought in as an 'alternative/Green' product, but still pose a hazard. Every product needs to be researched if we know what we are working with.

Waterless or Gel Hand Sanitizers Avoid having to breathe the vapour or scent of the sanitizer, avoid contact with eyes, do not taste or swallow and repeated exposure may cause skin dryness and cracking.

Ensure that the Hand Sanitizers used have 70% or more of ethyl alcohol.

Anti Bacterial Wipes Can cause eye irritation if it comes in contact with eyes.

Depending on the brand, overuse can turn your skin very dry and cracked.

Under *The Occupational Health & Safety Act*, every worker has the right to know what hazards they are exposed to in the workplace. Every employer must inform workers of the hazards in the workplace, put procedures in place to deal with those hazards, provide training and orientation, and provide the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to protect the worker from those hazards.

You have the right to request a MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) for any chemical or cleaner that is brought into the workplace.